

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. GREGG. Reserving the right to object, I suspect at a later time this will, hopefully, be worked out—hopefully sooner rather than later—but at this time I am going to have to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I would simply say to my friend, I hope that is the case. I hope we can move to this. I am a little suspect because we have been trying to work something out for quite a long time now. I will renew this request sometime later today, and I hope we can accomplish what we need to get accomplished.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I think most of us are a little distressed that the other side is objecting to a request which is a huge concession on the part of this Senator, as well as most of the Senators on this side of the aisle, and that would be helping the other side, and that is that we are agreeing to pass AMT not paid for. Why? Because we need to get the AMT patch fixed. We don't want the American taxpayers to have to pay additional taxes under the alternative minimum. We want to get this fixed right away.

It is also important to remind us that time is of the essence because the IRS has to get out the correct forms. The computer programs have to be written properly. So I very much hope that very quickly the other side will no longer object and we can get this passed.

Mr. President, this reminds me of an old joke, and the joke goes like this: There was a big flood, and a man of faith heard about it on the radio. But he did not flee to higher ground. He said: No, I'll put my trust in God. I am not going to flee to higher ground, even though there is this big flood, which I heard about on the radio. I'll put my trust in God.

Well, the waters surrounded the man's home. And as he was standing on his front porch, a boat came up and the skipper said: Jump in, I'll take you to safety. And the man said: No, I'm going to put my trust in God.

Well, the boat went away, and the water rose up to the roof. So the man stood on the roof, and a helicopter came and dropped a ladder, and the pilot yelled down: Climb up the ladder, I'll save you. But the man, said: No, I'm going to stay. I'll put my trust in God.

So the helicopter flew away, and the water continued to rise, and the man drowned. The man went to Heaven, and God asked him: What are you doing here? The man said: I put my trust in you, and you let me down.

Well, God said: What do you mean I let you down? I sent you a message, I sent you a boat, I sent you a helicopter. I tried to save you three times.

I think that is what the Republican caucus has done to the AMT. The

House passed a bill to prevent the AMT from hitting 19 million more taxpayers, but the Republican caucus said, no, we will wait for our own legislation. The majority leader asked unanimous consent to consider a compromise amendment that did not pay for the AMT but just paid for the extenders. The Republican caucus said, no, we will wait for our own legislation. And now the majority leader has once again asked consent to allow us to consider an amendment that does nothing but prevent new taxpayers from being hit by the AMT, and once again the Republican caucus said, no, we will wait for our own legislation.

Mr. President, at this point I want everyone to know if the AMT hits more taxpayers next year, it is not because of the House of Representatives. If the AMT hits more taxpayers next year, it is not because of the majority leader. If the AMT hits more taxpayers next year, it is not because of the Democratic caucus. If the AMT hits more taxpayers next year, it is because of the Republican caucus. That is clear. They cannot take yes for an answer.

We are trying to set it up so we can vote on a unanimous consent request to fix the AMT, unpaid for, and get it done now, but the Republican caucus says, no. They cannot take yes for an answer.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that we now proceed to a period of morning business for debate only; that Senators be allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I would hope that everyone understands we have a lot of balls in the air, and we are trying to grab a few of them to see if in the next few days we can work through some of them.

We have AMT, which hasn't been completed. The farm bill and spending bills have to be completed. We have many different bills we are trying to complete. If everyone will be patient and speak to their heart's content, we will try to have something legislatively that we can work on.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

NEW LEADERSHIP POSITION

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I was called off the floor just as the majority leader was saying some very nice things about me. I heard most of them, but I regret I didn't hear them all. I will ask him to repeat them privately. But in any event, it is true we are neighbors and

as a result have had an opportunity to work together on a lot of items. It doesn't matter which side of the aisle we are on, we can certainly do that.

I also appreciated the old story about the lawyers who fight for their clients' interest during the day, going at it tooth and nail, but when the day is over they get together. But as I heard the story it wasn't that they got together for a sandwich, I always thought they got together for a drink at the end of the day. But recognizing the majority leader's bent, I appreciate the story, and he certainly has my assurance that I will approach the position, which eventually I will take in a matter of a few days, in that same spirit.

Again, I appreciate the comments he made.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I have come to the floor today with my colleague, Senator SMITH.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Republican leader wish to be recognized?

Mr. McCONNELL. Let me say to my friend from Oregon that I will not be long, and I appreciate the opportunity to pay tribute to a fallen soldier from my State.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

STAFF SERGEANT JOE L. DUNIGAN, JR.

Mr. McCONNELL. The Commonwealth of Kentucky is mourning today because of the loss of one of our finest soldiers, and I am speaking of SSG Joe L. Dunigan, Jr., of Benton. He was 37 years old.

Staff Sergeant Dunigan's assignment was guarding a convoy of U.S. marines near Fallujah in Iraq when on March 11, 2004, an explosive device, set by terrorists, detonated near his humvee, tragically taking his life.

For the valor and bravery he displayed over two decades of service, the U.S. Army honored Staff Sergeant Dunigan with numerous medals and awards, including the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart, and the Meritorious Service Medal.

Staff Sergeant Dunigan, who will always be remembered by his family as Joey, wore his country's uniform for 20 years because he was proud to serve. Joey "lived his life the way he served his country—he was gung-ho about everything," says his stepfather, Sammie Bryant. And Joey was gung-ho from a very early age.

His family remembers that growing up Joey loved playing army. His favorite toy was GI Joe. In fact, family members often called him GI Joey. As a young boy, he participated in Cub Scouting and was an avid player of baseball and football.

Joey was also musically inclined, playing the trombone in the Marshall County High School Marching Marshals band. He enjoyed watching NASCAR races and was a big fan of